

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

WALTER M. DICKIE, M.D., Director

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GUY P. JONES
EDITOR

Public Health in the United States

Health conditions in the United States have not only been good during the past five years but continue favorable, according to Surgeon General Thomas Parran of the United States Public Health Service in his annual accounting to Congress. The average general death rate from 1931 to 1935, inclusive, was 10.9 per 1,000 population, the lowest rate recorded in the United States for any 5-year period, and the rate for 1935 was 10.8 per 1,000.

Doctor Parran points out that new low death rates were recorded for both typhoid fever and diphtheria in 1935, and that the tuberculosis death rate maintained the downward trend which has been one of the outstanding achievements in public health in recent decades. He also states that typhoid fever, extensive outbreaks of which formerly occurred with considerable frequency, has been reduced by modern sanitary procedures until it is no longer a major cause of sickness in this country. A new low death rate for infants under one year of age was also recorded in 1935, but maternal mortality showed no significant decline.

With the decrease in many of the communicable diseases which were previously made the special object of public health efforts, there has been a concomitant increase in deaths from the chronic diseases, such as heart disease and cancer, and the Public Health Service is now devoting increasing attention to the study of these conditions.

Neither cholera nor yellow fever appeared in the United States in the year ended June 30, 1936, but three cases of plague were reported in Western States, where the disease is constantly being encountered in rodents, several new species of which were found to harbor the infection in 1936. A total of nearly 11,000 cases of poliomyelitis was reported in 1935, as compared with 7,500 in 1934, this disease being unusually prevalent in the eastern regions of the country. Nearly 8,000 cases of smallpox were reported in 1935, an increase of 2,500 over the number for 1934, but a smaller number than for any year prior to 1933. The annual average for the five years preceding 1935 was 20,400.

In order to prevent the importation of disease through commerce, the Public Health Service keeps currently informed of the occurrence of dangerous infections in foreign countries and is on constant guard at our ports of entry for disease that may be brought by vessels and airplanes. To illustrate the constant danger from importation of diseases from abroad, the Surgeon General states that during 1935 nearly 350,000 cases of cholera were reported in foreign countries, 42,000 deaths from plague, 87,000 cases of typhus fever, and that yellow fever, the dreaded "yellow Jack" of unpleasant memory of the South, was reported in South America in Bolivia, Colombia, and Brazil, and in various localities in Africa.

As a result of the effectiveness of this sanitary guard at our ports, no quarantinable disease gained entrance during the fiscal year 1936. A case of smallpox was detained at quarantine at Boston, and two cases were detected and refused entry on the Mexican border. During the year quarantine officers of the Public Health Service inspected nearly 16,000 vessels, carrying 733,000 passengers and 1,182,000 seamen, and 2,281 airplanes carrying 31,898 persons; 1,193 of the vessels were fumigated. These officers also examined 824,400 alien passengers and 722,700 alien seamen under the immigration law.

Research in various fields relating to the cause and prevention of disease is an important function of the Public Health Service. These studies are designed to increase the fund of knowledge regarding diseases in order that improved and more effective control measures may be applied. The subjects to which intensive study was devoted included cancer, heart disease, malaria, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, poliomyelitis, leprosy, tularaemia, plague, bacteriology, prophylaxis and therapeutics, pharmacology, zoology, and chemistry, and such additional subjects as industrial diseases, nutrition, child hygiene, dental investigations, milk sanitation, and stream pollution.

Many years ago an officer of the Public Health Service proved that pellagra was a dietary-deficiency disease, and in recent years the Public Health Service, through experimentation, has determined the pellagra-preventive value of about 20 different foodstuffs. During the fiscal year 1936, tests showed that canned mackerel is a good source of the pellagra-preventive factor and that certain liver extracts are of considerable value in treating pellagra. Pellagra caused nearly 3,500 deaths in the United States in 1935.

A protective vaccine against Rocky Mountain spotted fever was first prepared by Public Health Service officers about ten years ago. During the fiscal year 1936, the largest quantity of this vaccine ever produced, 530 quarts, enough to vaccinate over 100,000 persons, was prepared at the Public Health Service Rocky Mountain laboratory at Hamilton, Montana.

In connection with the studies of Rocky Mountain spotted fever, a new species of tick, which was named *Ornithodoros parkeri* (for Dr. Parker of the Public Health Service), was discovered. Specimens of this tick were taken from ground squirrels, a jack rabbit, and a prairie dog in Wyoming. Studies are being made to determine whether it is a transmitting agent of human disease.

One of the important results of the study of two vaccines designed for specific immunization against poliomyelitis was the finding that they might, in rare

cases, cause the disease, and caution was advised in using them in future human tests until further investigation has been made. The report on these vaccines is believed to be the first publication of a thoroughly controlled study of a specific agent for immunization of the general population.

In 1935 research workers of the Public Health Service discovered that laboratory animals treated intranasally with sodium aluminum sulphate solution were rendered resistant to subsequent nasal instillation of poliomyelitis virus. In 1936 these investigators found that picric acid, alone or in combination with sodium aluminum sulphate, also has this preventive property, and that this action is effective under laboratory conditions against both poliomyelitis and epidemic encephalitis. These discoveries may prove to be of importance in controlling the diseases in man, but their practical value under natural conditions remains to be determined.

A phase of public health that is receiving emphasis under the new Surgeon General is that relating to the venereal diseases. A much greater activity by both Federal and State health services in the prevention of these diseases is foreseen by Surgeon General Parran. That this attitude is fully justified is readily understood when we consider that syphilis alone ranks with cancer, tuberculosis, and pneumonia as a leading cause of death. The Surgeon General says that "When these diseases are brought out into the open, freed from the medieval concept of condign punishment for moral transgressions, and are dealt with as any other highly communicable diseases, the way is open to eradicate them just as we have stamped out other dangerous infections."

Significant of the danger involved in the fight against disease is the report of the death, in line of duty, of a bacteriologist at the National Institute of Health, who succumbed to a virulent meningococcus infection acquired accidentally while conducting experiments in the laboratory.

The Public Health Service is engaged in the analysis of the enormous amount of data secured in the health inventory conducted in 1935 and 1936. This study included a survey of disabling illness, physical impairments, and facilities for medical care among 865,000 families in 90 cities and 23 rural counties—the most comprehensive survey of the kind ever undertaken in this country.

In addition to its strictly public health functions, the Public Health Service conducts 25 marine hospitals and relief stations in 154 ports for the hospital care and treatment of American merchant seamen and other legal beneficiaries, administers two narcotic

farms for the care and treatment of drug addicts, and furnishes and supervises medical and psychiatric services in Federal penal and correctional institutions. In the marine hospitals 1,904,300 hospital days were furnished and 1,290,000 out-patient treatments were given during the fiscal year.

During the year there was inaugurated the cooperative public health administration program authorized by sections 601 and 602, title VI, of the Social Security Act. By the close of the year each State had submitted a plan for operating under the public health provisions of this act and had been allotted funds from the available appropriation. In the opinion of the Surgeon General, "The public health provisions of the Social Security Act bid fair to provide the greatest impetus to health conservation efforts that has occurred in recent years. Moreover it marks the acknowledgment that local health service is a responsibility and obligation of the Federal government."

It is of interest to note that the report for 1936 covers the 138th year of the existence of the Public Health Service, which was originally created as the Marine Hospital Service by an act signed by the second President of the United States, John Adams, on July 16, 1798. The present Surgeon General, Thomas Parran, assumed charge of the Public Health Service on April 6, 1936, succeeding former Surgeon General Hugh S. Cumming, who retired on January 31, 1936, after serving as an officer of the Public Health Service for 42 years, and as Surgeon General for 16 years.

NEW HEALTH OFFICER AT NAPA

C. C. Hackett, D.D.S., City Health Officer of Napa has been obliged to retire because of ill health and has been succeeded by Dr. Robert S. Northrop. Dr. Hackett has served his city faithfully over a long period of years. Dr. Northrop is also the Health Officer of Napa County.

High speed civilization is forcing just as many new problems on the nursing profession as on all other fields of activity.

Nurses must prepare themselves not only to meet present-day problems but the even more difficult ones of the future.

The future promises more chronic than acute illness, a decrease in physical ailments but an increase in mental maladjustments, and due in great part to speed, accident cases will increase and their results will be increasingly difficult to cope with.—Pacific Coast Journal of Nursing.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The American Public Health Association announces that its 66th annual meeting will be held in New York City, October 5-8, 1937. A large eastern membership will receive that information with satisfaction. Not since 1921 has the association met in the world's greatest city. The 65th annual meeting took place in New Orleans in October. It attracted an attendance of 1650 health authorities representing 45 states, Canada, Cuba, Mexico and nine other foreign countries.

The National Organization for Public Health Nursing will meet with the American Public Health Association in 1937 for the first time. This large and important organization is expected to add another thousand to the registration lists.

The following related societies will meet with the association as usual: The American Association of School Physicians, International Society of Medical Health Officers, Conference of State Sanitary Engineers, Conference of State Laboratory Directors, Association of Women in Public Health, Delta Omega.

Dr. Reginald M. Atwater is the executive secretary of the association, and the headquarters offices are at 50 West 50th Street, New York, N. Y.

MODERN HOME LIFE

Home should be a place where children learn best of all the pleasure of mutual participation in common interests. And yet it is getting to be less and less a place where parents and children spend leisure time for the enjoyment of each other. Reading together is a lost art. The cultural aspects of child development are being loaded upon the school, the movies, the libraries and the Scout movements. Even play begins to be organized for the infant of eighteen months. Excellent as these institutions are they cannot substitute for the developmental possibilities of a real home. The permanent and durable satisfactions of life must have their origin in something within the individual that he creates himself. He will never know the possibilities within him unless he is allowed sometime to be alone. What restless souls one sees in all walks of life trying to keep from being bored with themselves! They cannot bear to eat alone, to stay alone in their home of an evening. In fact one hardly dares to invite guests for dinner without arranging a movie, theatre, or symphony for subsequent entertainment. Conversation about the open fire seems a breach of hospitality.—Esther Loring Richards, M. D.

Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made.

—Browning.

MORBIDITY

Complete Reports for Following Diseases for Week Ending
January 9, 1937.

Chickenpox

1104 cases: Alameda County 15, Alameda 5, Berkeley 24, Hayward 4, Oakland 31, San Leandro 34, Butte County 7, Chico 1, Contra Costa County 6, Martinez 1, Pittsburg 9, Richmond 1, Fresno County 11, Fresno 15, Kingsburg 2, Selma 3, Orland 1, Arcata 3, Eureka 1, El Centro 3, Kern County 46, Bakersfield 5, Kings County 3, Los Angeles County 33, Beverly Hills 2, Culver City 1, Glendale 9, La Verne 3, Long Beach 54, Los Angeles 79, Pasadena 18, Pomona 41, Redondo 3, San Fernando 3, San Gabriel 3, San Marino 3, Sierra Madre 1, Lynwood 1, South Gate 4, Maywood 1, Madera County 2, Chowchilla 3, San Rafael 20, Merced County 4, Merced 1, Monterey County 12, Carmel 2, Monterey 5, Salinas 15, Napa County 1, Orange County 8, Anaheim 1, Fullerton 9, Huntington Beach 2, Newport Beach 1, Orange 1, Santa Ana 14, Tustin 1, Riverside County 7, Beaumont 2, Corona 32, Riverside 3, Sacramento County 7, Sacramento 37, San Bernardino County 3, Ontario 3, Redlands 24, San Bernardino 1, San Diego 19, Chula Vista 16, Coronado 1, National City 3, Ocean-side 10, San Diego 25, San Francisco 139, San Joaquin County 3, San Luis Obispo County 1, Paso Robles 1, San Mateo County 4, Burlingame 4, Daly City 14, San Mateo 1, Santa Barbara County 8, Santa Barbara 9, Santa Clara County 9, Mountain View 5, Palo Alto 15, San Jose 36, Santa Clara 1, Santa Cruz County 6, Watsonville 16, Redding 1, Sierra County 6, Sonoma County 7, Healdsburg 3, Stanislaus County 6, Modesto 3, Newman 2, Oakdale 1, Tulare County 2, Lindsay 3, Santa Paula 1, Yolo County 9, Winters 3.

Diphtheria

32 cases: Oakland 1, Fresno County 1, Los Angeles County 2, Los Angeles 14, Madera County 2, Santa Ana 1, Roseville 1, San Diego 2, San Joaquin County 2, Arroyo Grande 1, Stanislaus County 1, Ventura County 2, Woodland 1, Yuba County 1.

German Measles

25 cases: Berkeley 2, Oakland 1, Piedmont 1, Humboldt County 1, Eureka 1, Lake County 1, Glendale 1, Long Beach 1, Los Angeles 3, Pasadena 1, Redondo 1, Fullerton 2, Roseville 1, San Diego 1, San Francisco 5, Davis 2.

Influenza

210 cases: Alameda 1, Berkeley 18, Oakland 3, Fresno County 1, Kingsburg 1, Orland 3, Kern County 16, Lake County 1, Los Angeles County 4, Claremont 1, El Monte 1, Glendale 1, Long Beach 11, Los Angeles 68, Pasadena 4, Torrance 1, Pacific Grove 1, Napa County 1, Placer County 6, Sacramento 1, San Diego County 5, San Diego 11, San Francisco 25, Stockton 1, Burlingame 1, Watsonville 2, Siskiyou County 13, Sonoma County 5, Yuba City 1, Lindsay 1, Sonora 1.

Measles

129 cases: Berkeley 1, Humboldt County 1, Imperial County 1, Lake County 1, Los Angeles County 1, Glendale 3, Los Angeles 6, Pasadena 2, Chowchilla 1, Salinas 1, Grass Valley 1, Roseville 32, Sacramento County 60, Sacramento 3, San Diego County 2, San Diego 2, San Francisco 4, San Luis Obispo County 1, San Luis Obispo 1, Burlingame 1, San Jose 1, Sutter County 2, California 1.*

Mumps

637 cases: Alameda 17, Berkeley 30, Livermore 5, Oakland 2, San Leandro 4, Butte County 6, Oroville 11, Contra Costa County 12, Pittsburg 24, Richmond 10, Fresno County 13, Fresno 7, Orland 5, Eureka 8, Imperial County 1, El Centro 9, Imperial 1, Kern County 7, Kings County 2, Los Angeles County 21, Beverly Hills 7, Compton 7, Glendale 2, Hermosa 2, Huntington Park 6, Inglewood 1, Long Beach 3, Los Angeles 63, Pasadena 7, Pomona 1, San Fernando 1, San Marino 1, Santa Monica 3, South Pasadena 8, Whittier 1, Lynwood 2, South Gate 1, Monterey Park 1, Madera County 1, Chowchilla 3, Merced County 3, Los Banos 4, Monterey County 5, King City 1, Salinas 1, St. Helena 1, Orange County 15, Orange 1, Santa Ana 39, Laguna Beach 2, Tustin 2, Placer County 1, Roseville 1, Riverside County 7, Riverside 16, Sacramento County 2, Sacramento 17, San Bernardino County 8, Ontario 3, San Bernardino 6, San Diego County 10, Chula Vista 1, Coronado 8, La Mesa 1, National City 20, San Diego 34, San Francisco 45, San Joaquin County 3, Burlingame 3, Lompoc 3, Santa Barbara 3, Santa Clara County 2, Palo Alto 1, San Jose 16, Sonoma County 1, Stanislaus County 1, Tulare County 1, Lindsay 2, Ventura County 14, Fillmore 16, Davis 1.

Pneumonia (Lobar)

130 cases: Berkeley 2, Oakland 3, Imperial County 1, Los Angeles County 4, Burbank 1, El Segundo 2, Glendale 3, Los Angeles 55, Pasadena 3, San Fernando 1, Madera County 2, Madera 1, Napa County 3, Calistoga 1, Riverside 2, Sacramento County 1, Sacramento 4, San Diego 3, San Francisco 11, San Joaquin County 13, Stockton 3, Tracy 1, Santa Barbara County 1, Santa

Barbara 1, San Jose 2, Watsonville 1, Sonoma County 3, Tulare County 1, Lindsay 1.

Scarlet Fever

310 cases: Alameda 1, Berkeley 2, Oakland 11, Butte County 1, Chico 4, Oroville 1, Contra Costa County 2, Pittsburg 1, Fresno County 18, Fresno 5, Kingsburg 1, Sanger 1, Selma 1, Humboldt County 1, Arcata 5, Kern County 7, Lassen County 3, Los Angeles County 6, Glendale 2, Glendora 1, Hermosa 1, Inglewood 1, La Verne 1, Long Beach 12, Los Angeles 41, Montebello 1, Pomona 2, Santa Monica 1, South Gate 2, Monterey Park 2, Madera County 1, Marin County 1, Mill Valley 4, San Rafael 1, Mariposa County 2, Yosemite National Park 1, Merced County 3, Merced 3, Monterey County 1, Pacific Grove 1, Napa County 8, Calistoga 1, Anaheim 1, Brea 1, Fullerton 1, Huntington Beach 2, Santa Ana 2, Placer County 2, Auburn 1, Colfax 3, Roseville 3, Riverside County 3, Corona 2, Sacramento County 5, Sacramento 26, National City 2, San Diego 4, San Francisco 20, Lodi 1, Manteca 1, Tracy 1, San Luis Obispo County 1, Paso Robles 2, San Mateo County 1, Burlingame 1, Daly City 1, Santa Barbara County 1, Lompoc 4, Santa Barbara 1, Santa Clara County 1, Palo Alto 3, San Jose 1, Santa Clara 1, Santa Cruz County 11, Watsonville 2, Redding 3, Siskiyou County 4, Dunsmuir 1, Solano County 1, Vallejo 3, Healdsburg 1, Tehama County 1, Red Bluff 1, Tulare County 4, Exeter 1, Porterville 5, Tuolumne County 3, Ventura County 3, Oxnard 1, Yolo County 1.

Smallpox

12 cases: Contra Costa County 2, Walnut Creek 1, Los Angeles 2, San Joaquin County 3, Siskiyou County 3, California 1.*

Typhoid Fever

5 cases: Lake County 1, Newman 1, Tulare County 2, Porterville 1.

Whooping Cough

339 cases: Alameda County 8, Alameda 7, Berkeley 2, Oakland 5, Martinez 1, Richmond 1, Fresno County 30, Fresno 12, Imperial County 10, Kern County 4, Los Angeles County 5, Culver City 2, Glendale 1, Long Beach 3, Los Angeles 60, Pasadena 5, Santa Monica 13, South Pasadena 8, Whittier 3, Madera County 5, Chowchilla 2, Merced 2, Orange County 10, Anaheim 6, Fullerton 1, Huntington Beach 1, Orange 1, Santa Ana 3, Riverside County 6, Corona 1, Riverside 1, Sacramento County 2, Sacramento 3, San Diego County 14, Chula Vista 1, El Cajon 2, La Mesa 1, San Diego 8, San Francisco 21, San Joaquin County 4, Stockton 3, San Luis Obispo County 1, San Luis Obispo 1, Daly City 3, Santa Barbara County 2, Santa Barbara 8, Santa Maria 5, San Jose 2, Modesto 6, Tulare County 4, Exeter 26, Fillmore 3.

Meningitis (Epidemic)

11 cases: Los Angeles County 1, Los Angeles 5, Lincoln 1, San Bernardino County 1, Ontario 1, San Francisco 1, Daly City 1.

Dysentery (Amoebic)

One case: Oakland.

Leprosy

One case: Los Angeles.

Poliomyelitis

3 cases: Bakersfield 1, San Francisco 1, Stanislaus County 1.

Trachoma

4 cases: Los Angeles 2, Madera County 1, San Francisco 1.

Encephalitis (Epidemic)

One case: San Francisco.

Paratyphoid Fever

One case: Oakland.

Typhus Fever

One case: Chula Vista.

Jaundice (Epidemic)

2 cases: Oakdale.

Food Poisoning

One case: Lake County.

Undulant Fever

2 cases: Los Angeles 1, San Mateo County 1.

Septic Sore Throat (Epidemic)

One case: Lake County.

Rabies (Animal)

23 cases: Los Angeles County 4, Los Angeles 12, Signal Hill 1, Maywood 1, Orange County 1, Santa Ana 1, San Bernardino 1, Santa Cruz County 1, Visalia 1.

* Cases charged to "California" represent patients ill before entering the State or those who contracted their illness traveling about the State throughout the incubation period of the disease. These cases are not chargeable to any one locality.